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This study consists of a content analysis of LibGuides on the topic of the American West/westward expansion through a critical lens. It evaluates how well these guides reflect current historical practice and theory on the American West/westward expansion, as well as how well they reflect the values of critical librarianship, a theoretical lens that librarians can use to inform their practice. This study purposively sampled LibGuides on this topic and investigated both manifest and latent content within them, focusing on the quality of the topics and resources included, to identify any issues or inadequacies in these guides. This study provides a critical approach towards LibGuides that can be used in future studies and incorporated into practice by current and future librarians.

Headings:

Content analysis

Academic libraries

Finding aids

MANIFEST DESTINY AND LATENT CONTENT:  
A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF LIBGUIDES ON THE AMERICAN  
WEST/WESTWARD EXPANSION

by

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## Introduction

LibGuides, often referred to as such due to the Springshare content management system widely used to create them, have become a ubiquitous resource on library websites in recent years. Springshare has over 779,000 LibGuides hosted on their platform (“LibGuides Community”, n.d.). Also called subject guides, research guides, resource guides, etc., these guides serve as curated collections and lists of resources on particular topics or for particular courses. These guides reflect the collections of the library that hosts them, as well as being used as instructional and research tools by students, faculty, and librarians (Reitz, 2004, p. 612). Despite the ubiquity and popularity of LibGuides, little study has been done to critically evaluate these guides in terms of how well the topics and resources presented in them support current practice and theory in their respective disciplines or how these guides support and foster the values of librarianship, particularly those of critical librarianship.

Critical librarianship, as defined by one of its main proponents, “acknowledges and then interrogates the structures that produce us as librarians, our spaces as libraries, our patrons as students, faculty, and the public, whose interface with the sum of human knowledge is produced, in large part, by us” (Drabinski, 2019, p.49). Critical librarianship as a theory relies on the acknowledgement that, “libraries, like all institutions, are produced in and through systems marked by racism, patriarchy, and capitalist modes of production” (Drabinski, 2019, p. 49). It is a theoretical framework

that can be applied to all aspects of library and information work, from reference services to instruction to collection development.

This study critically examines LibGuides on the history of the American West/westward expansion in an effort to evaluate how well these guides reflect current historical practice and theory on this topic and how well these guides reflect the values of critical librarianship. Recent events in America have laid bare many of the biases and inadequacies of the mainstream narratives of American history. The history of the American West/westward expansion, in particular, is a subject often fraught with biased and incomplete/oversimplified narratives, partly due to its popularity as a subject in American media and partly due to how the traditional narratives and ideals of the American West, such as rugged individualism and manifest destiny, serve as the basis for much of mainstream American identity and culture. The issues identified by Emily Drabinski, such as racism and sexism, are some of the issues rampant in the historical narrative of the American West and westward expansion.

By performing a content analysis on a sample of LibGuides on this topic, this study identifies issues or inadequacies with these particular LibGuides, such as limited diversity of topics/perspectives, outdated resources that only serve outdated narratives, lack of inclusion of historically neglected and marginalized topics/perspectives, etc. This study is meant as a starting point, an exploration that can inform future studies of LibGuides through a critical lens and inform future practice in relation to creating LibGuides that are reflective of current practice in both their respective discipline/subject and in the field of library science.

## Literature Review

### LibGuides

Most studies on LibGuides focus on design and usability. Most of them are practical studies meant to inform best practices for design and implementation (Goodsett, et al., 2020). Many studies also examine the impact and effectiveness of LibGuides (Dahl, 2001; Jackson & Pellack, 2004; Morris & Bosque, 2010; Vilen, 2007). There have only been a handful of studies that compare LibGuides on a particular topic from different institutions. The topics covered include Geology (Dougherty, 2013a), Geography (Dougherty, 2013b), Nursing (Stankus & Parker, 2012), Physician Assistants (Johnson & Johnson, 2017), 3D printing (Horton, 2017), Slavic Studies (Truslow, 2009), East Asian Studies (Chen & Chen, 2015), theology (Van Dyke, 2015), Engineering (Osorio, 2014), Law (Mattson, 2013), Business (Dunsmore, 2002), and Literary Studies (Neilson, 2004). There have been no content analysis studies on History LibGuides specifically. These various studies cover the organization, topics, and resources of the guides, but only the Neilson article on literary studies examines the guides to see whether they reflect current practice/theory in their discipline. These studies focus more on the manifest content of the guides and do not examine the resources within them specifically. There are no studies currently that examine specific LibGuides through a critical librarianship lens.

## Critical Librarianship

Critical librarianship literature covers not only theory, but also practice, mostly in relation to pedagogy/instruction and information literacy (referred to as “critical information literacy”), cataloging and classification, and references services (see Tewell, 2015 for a comprehensive literature review covering critical librarianship/information literacy; also see Garcia, 2015 for a brief overview of the history of the term and some key resources/readings on the topic). There are only two studies that examine LibGuides through the lens of critical librarianship (Guillian and Zitser, 2015; Hicks, 2015). These focus on pedagogical theory and practice, asking whether LibGuides are a useful tool for instruction and research, rather than on examining the content of the guides and their resources. These studies critique the way LibGuides fail to foster “transformative educational experiences” (Guillian & Zister, p. 174) and how they “run the risk of misrepresenting both the nature and scope of research and inquiry” (Hicks, para. 2). Both studies also note the paucity of critiques against LibGuides as a tool. There are no studies specifically on History as a discipline or History LibGuides that use critical librarianship theories or practices. As much of critical librarianship dialogue takes place on Twitter, under the “#critlib” hashtag created by Emily Drabinski, one of the main proponents of critical librarianship, there could be informal discourse on these topics, but those have yet to make it into published scholarly literature.

## Historiography of the American West/Westward Expansion

There are three distinct stages to the historiography of the American West and Westward Expansion: the “frontier thesis”, the New Western History movement, and the most recent and current movement, the Newest Western history, that focuses on the West



as borderlands/cultural crossroads. The “frontier thesis”, created by Frederick Jackson Turner in the late 1800s, was the dominant paradigm for a long time. Turner is considered the “founding father of Western history” (Massip, 2012, para. 3). The frontier thesis dominated Western historiography from Turner’s initial paper, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History”, delivered at the 1893 meeting of the American Historical Association (and later reproduced in his essay collection *The Frontier in American History* published in 1920), through the 1950s (Turner, 1893; Turner, 1962).

Turner’s West was a triumph of American exceptionalism and manifest destiny, the kind of West depicted in popular movies from the 1940s and 50s, the “cowboy and Indians” style of the West that celebrated the white men that “conquered” the untamed, savage wilderness and the Native Americans that inhabited it. Turner saw the frontier as a place, a meeting ground of savage wilderness and civilization, and also as a process, “the stripping away of European traits” to assume “new traits that set them apart from their forefathers” (Paul & Malone, 1985, p. 31). For Turner and his disciples, the West was synonymous with Westward Expansion (Aron, 2009, p. 4). The historiography of the American West, up until the 1950s, was dominated by cowboys, ranchers, miners – mostly white, American men (Paul & Malone, 1985, pp. 35-38).

Native Americans were the paradoxical “Noble Savages” and were “widely misunderstood and misrepresented” (Paul & Malone, 1985, p. 41). Women were ignored or depicted merely as stereotypes and only in the context of their relationships with men (Paul & Malone, 1985, p. 46). Ethnic minorities, including Europeans like Germans and Irish, were also largely ignored, as were people of color, such as Black and Chinese people, and other groups seen as “non-American”, despite them being as much a part of

American culture as anyone else, such as Mormons (Paul & Malone, 1985, pp. 46-48).

Part of the reason this paradigm reigned supreme for so long was that it offered a romantic view of American values, like rugged individualism, democracy, American exceptionalism, and nationalism (Massip, 2012, para. 3-8; Paul & Malone, 1985, p. 31). Turner's frontier thesis was an appealing, compelling narrative that claimed to explain American identity and, "offered the story of the birth of a nation to a people self-conscious of the shortness of its national history" (Massip, 2012, para. 7). It also dominated because this romantic ideal of the American West became enshrined in popular culture and had mass appeal beyond professional historians (Massip, 2012, para. 8; Paul & Malone, 1985, p. 27 and p. 31).

After the social upheaval of the 1960s and 70s, the New Western history paradigm was born, peaking in the 80s and 90s. New Western historians took a revisionist and critical approach to the West, decrying the colonialism and imperialism that was celebrated by Turner and instead focusing on the West as a multicultural region with its own distinct identity. New Western historians focused on the West as a region (roughly the Western half of the current United States), a place more than a process, and expanded the temporal scope to go beyond the late 1800s and into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, unlike the Turnerian historians (Aron, 2009, p. 5; Massip, 2012, paras. 9-14). New Western historians banished the "f-word", frontier, from their vocabulary and replaced it with "conquest" (Aron, 2009, p. 6; Massip, 2012, para. 10).

New Western historians highlighted those groups that had long been silenced – women and children, Native Americans, Mexicans, Black people, Chinese people, etc.

(Aron, 2009, p. 6; Massip, 2012, para. 10; Paul & Malone, 1985, pps. 46-48).

The New Western historians sought to revise the traditional notion of the history of the West as, “a one-dimensional story of white men marching westward and replacing savagery by civilization” and instead frame it as, “a multicultural tale highlighting ethnic and racial diversity” (Massip, 2012, para. 10). Where Turner saw triumph and glory, they saw exploitation, destruction, and moral ambiguity (Massip, 2012, para. 10).

The late 1990s saw the history of the American West embroiled in the wider “culture wars” going on in American society, with critics saying the New Western history, “left out the good parts and recast America’s frontier heritage as a multicultural course in ‘failure studies’” (Aron, 2009, p. 6). The regionalist focus that New Western historians advocate, along with their focus on how the West is distinct from other regions, ironically stressed the uniqueness and exceptionalism of the region in much the same way Turner’s frontier thesis did (Massip, 2012, para. 13). Though, for Turner, the study of the West was a way to explain American identity as a whole, whereas for New Western historians, the study of the West stems from a “ferocious, regional pride” and, “is akin to a manifesto, with the historians, themselves proud westerners, eager to restore to favor a region whose history has long been overshadowed by the colonial past of the East and the slavery heritage of the South” (Massip, 2012, para. 12).

The New Western history had several shortcomings that led to the need for another paradigm shift. First, the focus on the West as a specific, geographically bound region had the effect of generalizing/homogenizing the West and masking the diversity of the West, such as important subregional variations (Massip, 2012, para. 15). New Western historians also tended to exaggerate the differences between the West and other

American regions, which undercut the dynamic nature of the West and its importance in American history and culture (Massip, 2012, para. 16-17). To avoid this isolating and static perspective on the West, historians have sought to form a new paradigm that goes beyond the dichotomy of place/process and region/frontier (Massip, 2012, para. 18).

The current paradigm in the historiography of the American West, dubbed the Newest Western history, continues the revisionist and multicultural approach, emphasizing the roles and contributions of the many different groups that lived in the West, both before and after American expansion. But the regionalism and focus on the West as a distinct, unique place has been replaced with an emphasis on the West as a borderland and a cultural crossroads, where different actors and groups intermingled, mutually exchanging ideas, goods, culture, etc. This Newest Western history can best be defined by the concept of “convergence”, described by Aron (2009) as, “a way of seeing the large, evolving story of the American West as an interwoven tapestry of cultures and peoples, and a way of understanding how their stories are connected to one another – and to us” (p. 4). This new multiculturalism is not one focused on how certain cultures conquered or exploited others, but instead sees neither culture, such as Native or European/American, as having a necessarily superior position over the other. It also emphasizes the way cultures interacted with and affected one another, bringing back the dynamism of Turner’s frontier concept (Aron, 2009, p. 7; Massip, 2012, para. 18-19).

The newest history of the West brings together the New Western idea of expanding the narrative beyond myths of American exceptionalism and “great white men” with Turner’s idea of the West as a borderland/frontier that greatly shaped the

history and identity of America. The “borderlands” concept was actually born in the 1920s from the mind of historian Herbert Eugene Bolton, but he mainly focused on the concept in terms of Spanish (as opposed to American) men and their triumphs over natives and nature (Hernandez, 2011, p. 325). Currently, the borderlands concept has grown beyond that traditional approach and has become central to the new paradigm of the American West, transforming the “near-mythic narratives of conquest and cowboys” into “analyses of contested power and places, cultural exchanges and syncretism, uprisings and resistance, race and racialization, and gender and sexuality” (Hernandez, 2011, p. 326-327).

The Newest Western history seeks to paint a more complete and nuanced picture of the American West, casting historical actors not as simply villains or victims, but as agents who actively participated in the formation of the West in both positive and negative ways. The concept of agency is key to this Newest Western history, with many Newest Western historians emphasizing, “the power native peoples exercised and their ability to compel accommodations from colonial intruders” (Aron, 2009, p. 8). For example, there has been much scholarship on the concept of Indians being able to play competing European colonial interests against one another for their own gain, or the idea that there were zones where Europeans remained subordinate to Indians, such as with the great Comanche empire (Aron, 2009, p. 8).

Despite the paradigm shifts in historical scholarship in the past several decades, the frontier thesis and the “cowboys and Indians” concept of the American West has persisted in popular culture and in primary education. The frontier thesis has remained the dominant narrative (also referred to as “master narrative” or “metanarrative”) which

is a narrative that is created by and reflects the dominant culture (“Metanarrative”, 2020). The issue of how history is taught at the primary (and often undergraduate) level and the issues with history textbooks is beyond the scope of this literature review, but it is important to recognize that these master narratives limit student’s understanding of history and, “frames which monuments, or accounts of the past, are (re)constructed” which has wider political and cultural implications “because by framing the past, the future is also framed” (Carretero & van Alphen, 2014, p. 291). To combat these master narratives and give students a richer understanding of history, counter narratives must be introduced, much like the revisionist histories of the New Western or Newest Western movements, which sought to tell the stories/perspectives of those neglected in the master narrative, such as women and Native Americans. For more context of this issue and some examples, see Aldridge (2006), Carretero & van Alphen (2014), Demoigny & Ferraras-Stone (2018), Salinas, Blevins, & Sullivan (2012), and VanSledright (2008).

## Research Questions and Definitions

This study consists of a content analysis of academic library LibGuides on the American West/westward expansion, designed to answer the following questions:

1. What topics and resources are covered in these LibGuides? What is left out?
2. How well do these guides reflect current practice/theory in the academic study of the American West/westward expansion?
3. How well do these guides reflect the values of critical librarianship?

This study uses the term “LibGuide(s)”, as opposed to resource guides, research guides, etc. since it is the platform on which most guides are currently made, so tends to be the most often used term to refer to these resources. I also use this term since I collected my data samples using the Springshare LibGuide community page, which allows for searching of all published LibGuides.

The American West, sometimes called the “Old West”, the “Wild West”, or just “the West”, is the area to the west of the Mississippi river in the United States, which was settled by a movement throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century called “westward expansion”. The history of the American West covers topics such as the gold rush, the Oregon trail, the Mexican-American war, the Louisiana Purchase, Indian removal and conflicts with Indians, creation of new U.S. territories and states, the expansion and debate over slavery which led to the Civil War, etc. I use the combined term the American West/westward

expansion in this study to cover both the movement/event of westward expansion and the broader topic of the American West.

Critical librarianship is defined in this study as a theoretical lens that librarians can apply to their work that emphasizes examining the power structures and dynamics of libraries/librarians as curators of knowledge/information, empowering marginalized voices and communities, committing to social justice, and questioning the status quo (Drabinski, 2019). To apply a critical perspective to one's work means to examine and critique the historical, cultural, social, political, and economic forces that shape information. As Garcia (2015) argues, "Information is not neutral, thus the way that information is presented by librarians adds meaning and context for students." The topics, perspectives, and resources presented in LibGuides can greatly influence a student's understanding of that subject, and potentially limit or expand their knowledge, research interests, etc.



## Methodology

This study is a qualitative content analysis, examining both manifest and latent content of my sample of LibGuides. I have evaluated the topics and resources included in the guides, with an emphasis on the diversity of the topics, the quality of the resources, and the inclusion of traditionally neglected or marginalized topics and perspectives, such as women, people of color (such as Native Americans, Chinese laborers, African Americans – both free and enslaved), non-Americans (such as the Spanish), etc. I use qualitative coding techniques to elucidate the themes present in these LibGuides and the resources within them. Since I am attempting to explore the content of the guides in depth, rather than examining things like format/design or usage/effectiveness, a content analysis is the best method for answering my research questions.

### Positionality / Researcher Role

My interest in the topic stems from my background in history (M.A. in American History) and my hope of being an academic librarian who serves history students/faculty, and therefore will probably be tasked with the creation of LibGuides on historical subjects. I also have an interest in critical librarianship and social justice initiatives in libraries/education, which will inform my analysis and be a lens through which I analyze the guides.

## Sample

I sampled LibGuides from academic libraries that cover the topic of the American West/westward expansion. I focused on the topics presented in the guide (such as the sections/tabs) as well as the resources (books, databases, webpages, etc.) included in the guides.

## Data Collection Methods

I used purposive sampling to select guides that fit the specific criteria needed for my study. For my purposes, the guides needed to:

- Be created/hosted by a university/college library in the United States.
- Be broadly on the topic of the American West/westward expansion.

Course specific guides are not included unless the course is a more general/comprehensive course on this topic. Guides that are too broad, such as on 19<sup>th</sup> century America as a whole, are not included. Neither are guides that are too specific, as in covering one specific aspect or event (ie: the gold rush).

- Contain curated lists/links of resources, such as books, articles, webpages, etc. Guides that only contain how-to information or general library information (such as general library databases, links to the catalog, etc.) are not included.
- Be distinct, stand-alone guides and not part of a larger LibGuide.

I searched Springshare's Libguide Community page, which lists published libguides, for keywords like "American West", "westward expansion", "American frontier", "old west", etc. I also did a Google search for similar keywords plus "libguide"

or “subject/research/resource guide” to cross-check and see if I missed any. I ended up with 3 LibGuides that fit my criteria out of an initial sample of 18 guides that came up in my search. These 3 guides are from Central Washington University, Sam Houston State University, and Columbia College.

Since I used purposive sampling, there of course will not be randomization and there could be bias in my selections. To mitigate this, I provided and adhered to clear definitions of my criteria for selection. This type of sampling is also often not generalizable, but my study is qualitative and exploratory in nature and not intended to generalize about all guides on this topic but to see if trends/issues emerge for further exploration/study, so sample size and generalizability are not relevant issues for the purpose of my study.

## Data Analysis Methods

I coded the themes and topics covered by the guide through examining the guide itself, such as section headings/descriptions, and the resources within it. For coding the resources and their topics, I used library subject headings, summaries/descriptions, and/or reviews (especially for books) to categorize the topics covered. I also examined the historical theory/framework or perspective of the work, if possible, through descriptions/reviews of the work and the author(s) to see how they fit into the current academic history paradigm. This study goes beyond the basics of describing and comparing the types of resources present in the guides, like many similar studies on subject guides have done, and dives deeper into the latent content – the quality of the resources in terms of how they fit into historical practice/theory on the topic and critical theories about diversity, inclusion, master versus counter narratives, etc. To do this, I

created my own iterative, open coding scheme that draws on my experience with historical research/theory and established historical themes of the topic as well as organizational frameworks already present in the guides. I created several Word documents to keep my notes on each guide. I created a document with the contents and pertinent information for each guide. I then went through each guide and coded the resources that I could, excluding any that are too general such as databases and newspapers. I made several passes through each document, highlighting topical or thematic terms and phrases. I then organized these terms and phrases into a framework of broader topics and then narrower subtopics. I also used color-coding in my notes to easily differentiate between different topics. I also determined relevant quantitative data for each LibGuide, such as counting up how many times/in how many resources a topic was represented.

## Research Quality and Ethical Considerations

My main strategy for ensuring trustworthiness in my study is providing detailed descriptions and being transparent in my positionality, my methods, my criteria, my reasoning, etc. I also grounded my study in existing theory – both historical and library science theories. I also engaged in peer review/support from peers and advisors along the way. I tried to gather a sufficient sample of guides and spend sufficient time evaluating them, while being realistic about availability of guides and my own time constraints. To ensure dependability and transferability, I have provided thick description of my methods and results and kept detailed notes of my analysis and coding scheme. I have also been forthcoming with issues with my study, limitations, etc.

The only potential ethical issue with my study would be possible offense from the librarians who created these guides, should my analysis happen to be very critical of their guides. To mitigate this, I have ensured my language when critiquing the guides is constructive and justified by the data and the theoretical frameworks I am using.

## Impact and Limitations

This study has implications for resource selection and LibGuide creation – it can potentially help guide more diverse, inclusive, and comprehensive LibGuide resource selection that accurately reflects current historical trends/practice as well as critical librarianship practice/theory. Practicing librarians, especially those whose subject area is history or who create Libguides, would be most impacted by this study. The students/faculty that utilize LibGuides on this topic could also be impacted. This study will hopefully inspire more studies that either look at other topics/disciplines or expand to include interviews/surveys/etc. with librarians, students, faculty, and scholars about LibGuides. This study will also provide a tangible example of how to incorporate critical librarianship into practice and will hopefully be useful to other librarians interested in taking a critical approach toward LibGuides.

Due to a lack of samples that fulfill my criteria, my study is limited to a small sampling of guides. Since this is a qualitative and more exploratory study, I cannot make any objective, generalizable statements – my results are more subjective judgements and observations meant to open up avenues for further similar studies and to inform my own future practice as a librarian, as well as potentially other librarian's practices and perspectives.

This study does not cover design or usage of the guides since my focus is on quality of content and many other studies focus on design/usage. My discussion of

critical librarianship is limited to how that theoretical framework and way of thinking about librarianship can be a useful lens to evaluate guides and therefore does not go into depth on the theory. My historiography and discussion of the topic of the American West is also limited and focused on general overview, as the details of the topic are not as important as the general trends of how historians have viewed and written about it.

## Results

### Central Washington University LibGuide

#### Overview/Description of LibGuide

The LibGuide from Central Washington University is titled “History, Trans-Mississippi American West” and was created by Marty Blackson, who is the Senior Lecturer in Archives and Special Collections at the Brooks Library. According to the LibGuide metadata, it was last updated in February of 2021. It has “history” listed as its subject and does not have any tags added to it. Underneath the title of the guide, as with most LibGuides, is a brief description that reads, “This guide cites primary and secondary sources relevant to the history of the United States west of the Mississippi River.” On the Home page of the guide, there is a box titled “Welcome!” that has a more detailed description of the guide which states, “This guide cites primary and secondary sources relevant to the history of the United States west of the Mississippi River. Particular emphasis is given to primary sources that are freely available online. Most sources are presented by subject matter, with attention given to the experience of various ethnic groups in the American West.”

The guide is organized into pages that correspond to specific topics or regions or specific resource types. There are three pages dedicated to specific resource types: “Finding Books”, “Finding Newspapers”, and “Academic Journals”. The rest of the pages are categorized by topic as follows:



- Crime in the West
- Environmental History
- Labor in the West
- Trading and Exploration
- Western Migration
- Women in the West
- African American History
- Asian American History
- Latin American History
- Native American History
- California History
- Mountain West History
- Pacific Northwest History
- Southwest History

The guide is comprised mostly of primary sources, particularly online collections and webpages. There are 116 resources included in the guide total which the specific breakdown as follows:

- Books/Ebooks: 10
- Databases/Journals: 6
- Digital Collections/Web Resources: 73
- Newspapers: 15
- Other LibGuides: 5
- Microfilm: 7

There is also a list of suggested Library of Congress subject headings on the “Finding Books” page that includes the following subject headings:

California--Gold discoveries

Frontier and pioneer life

Great Basin -- History

Great Plains -- History

Indians of North America -- History

Mexican War, 1846-1848

Mormons -- History

Pacific States -- History

Pioneers -- West (U.S.) -- Biography

Southwest, New -- History

Utah -- History

Washington (State) -- History

West (U.S.) -- Description and travel

Themes and Topics of Resources

Of the 116 resources included in the guide, I coded 95 of them for topics/themes.

I omitted newspapers and databases/journals from my coding due to them being more generalized and not providing meaningful data. As this guide is topically/thematically organized, I used its categories as a framework while coding. Since each page is dedicated to a specific topic, I also included the number of resources per page. The topics included in the guide, as well as the subtopics within, are as follows:

- Crime in the West (3 resources)

- Bonnie and Clyde
  - Roslyn Bank Robbery
  - Murder of William Robinson
- Environmental History (9 resources)
  - Water conservation/Dams
  - Fisheries
  - Nuclear test sites
  - Construction projects/field surveys
  - Landscapes/photography
- Labor in the West (14 resources)
  - Strikes/protests and massacres
  - Unions/Industrial Workers of the World
  - The Great Depression and the New Deal
  - Mining
  - Ranching/rodeos
- Trade and Exploration (5 resources)
  - Lewis and Clark expedition
  - John Powell expedition
  - Fur trade and trappers
  - Sporting party/expedition
- Western Migration (9 resources)
  - Overland trails/trail diaries
  - Pioneers, including Mormon pioneers

- California Gold Rush
- Women in the West (7 resources)
  - Women's rights/political activists, including Abigail Scott Duniway (writer) and Eva Greenslit Anderson (educator/politician)
  - Women in the workforce during WWII
  - Women working (1800 – 1930)
  - Homesteading
- African American History (7 resources)
  - Funeral programs of African Americans in San Antonio from 1935 to present day
  - Black pioneers and their descendants in the West
  - Black miners in Roslyn, Washington
  - Slavery and the Underground Railroad
  - Civil Rights movement in Seattle
  - The African American Experience in Las Vegas, Nevada
  - African American heritage in Tucson, Arizona
- Asian American History (8 resources)
  - Japanese internment/relocation during WWII
  - Japanese American experience during the early 1900s
  - Chinese Americans and immigrants in California
  - Korean American experience in 1900s
  - Refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia post-Vietnam War
  - South Asian immigrants between 1950s and 1980s

- Latin American History (6 resources)
  - Chicano/a movement in Washington State
  - Hispanic music and culture of the Northern Rio Grande
  - Tejanos/as post-WWII (racial discrimination)
  - Texas-Mexican Presbyterian churches
- Native American History (2 resources)
- California History (4 resources)
- Mountain West History (4 resources)
- Pacific Northwest History (8 resources)
- Southwest History (9 resources)

The Native American History page links out to a LibGuide entirely on Native American history and the Brooks Library special collection on Native Americans, so does not have its own subtopics (the LibGuide on Native Americans is also currently unavailable). The regional pages include resources that cover a broad range of topics and mostly consist of links to archives/special collections dedicated to those region's histories and oral history/digital history projects centered in those regions.

#### Scholarly Paradigm of Resources/Guide

The scope of the guide, which focuses on the West as a geographic region and place, is aligned with the New Western history paradigm, which defines the West on geographical and not temporal terms and extends the history of the West beyond the 1800s. The use of regional topics, such as Pacific Northwest or Southwest, is also the way the New Western historians categorize their works, as they view each region as its own distinct culture and argue that the terrain and geography of each region contributes

greatly to its history. The emphasis on marginalized groups, like women, African Americans, and Asian Americans, is also a main tenet of New Western history, though this focus is also continued by Newest Western historians. The focus on social/cultural history is also aligned with both New West and especially Newest Western history. There are not many secondary sources to evaluate to determine more about the scholarly paradigm of the resources within the guide, but overall, it seems to be mostly rooted in the New Western approach that began in the 1970s.

## Sam Houston State University LibGuide

### Overview/Description of LibGuide

The LibGuide from Sam Houston State University is titled “HIST 4370 / HIST 5377: American West” and was created by Kristina Claunch, a Research Librarian in the Newton Gresham Library. It was last updated in January of 2021. The LibGuide metadata includes the subject of the guide as “history” and it is tagged with “HIST4370”.

Underneath the title, the brief description of the guide reads, “Get started researching topics in the history of the American West.” On the main page, there is a box titled “Purpose” that includes a more detailed description of the guide, “This guide is intended to provide a starting point for researching topics in the history of the American West. This guide is not comprehensive; it does not list all of the resources on this subject or in related disciplines owned by the Library or available on the Internet. This guide serves merely as a starting point for research.”

This guide is organized into pages based on resource type (“Find Books”, “Find Articles”, “Primary Sources”, and “Videos and Interactive Maps”) as well as a page for “Other Useful Tools” for research, which includes resources on historical research and

writing, and a page for resources on Chicago Style citations. The pages dedicated to resources are organized as follows:

- Find Books (main page)
  - Purpose (description of the guide)
  - Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, and Other Reference Books
  - Specific Groups in the West
  - Historiography
  - Browse the Collection (list of call numbers)
  - Search the Catalog
  - Video Refresher: Intro to Searching the Catalog
  - Subject Headings (list of Library of Congress subject headings)
  - A Sampling of Books in the Main Collection
- Find Articles
  - Best Bet Databases for Secondary Source Articles
  - Additional Databases for Secondary Source Articles
  - Quick Searches
- Primary Sources
  - Historical Newspapers
  - Other Historical Document Collections
  - Native Americans: Primary Source Collections Online
  - Primary Source Collections in Print
  - West, Southwest, and Borderlands: Primary Source Collections Online

- More Primary Sources Online
- Video and Interactive Maps
  - Videos from Film on Demand
  - Search Films on Demand
  - Interactive Maps

There are 106 resources included in the guide, which are a mixture of primary, secondary, and tertiary sources. The types of resources are as follows:

- Books/Ebooks: 31
- Databases: 8
- Digital collections/web resources: 54
- Newspapers: 9
- Microfilm: 1
- Video: 1
- Interactive Map: 1
- Other LibGuides: 1 (“U.S. History Primary Source Collections Online”)

The Find Books page includes a brief list of Library of Congress call numbers for the topic of the American West:

- F590.3 - F705 - The West, Trans-Mississippi Region, Great Plains
- F721 - F785 - Rocky Mountains, Yellowstone National Park
- F786 - F850 - The New Southwest, Colorado River, Canyon, and Valley
- F850.5 - F951 - Pacific States

There is also a list of subject headings:

- West (U.S.) History



- West (U.S.) History Indians of North America
- West (U.S.) History ... (divided into many other sub-topics)
- West (U.S.) History 19th century
- West (U.S.) History 19th century Bank robberies
- West (U.S.) History 19th century Indians of North America
- West (U.S.) History 19th century ... (divided into many other sub-topics)
- West (U.S.) History 20th century
- West (U.S.) History 20th century Environmental policy
- West (U.S.) History 20th century Indians of North America
- West (U.S.) History 20th century ... (divided into many other sub-topics)
- West (U.S.) History 1848-1860 (also divided into sub-topics)
- West (U.S.) History 1860-1890 (also divided into sub-topics)
- West (U.S.) History 1890-1945 (also divided into sub-topics)
- West (U.S.) History 1945- (also divided into sub-topics)
- West (U.S.) Historiography
- Frontier and pioneer life West (U.S.) Historiography

### Themes and Topics of Resources

Of the 106 resources included in the guide, I coded 89 of them (excluded newspapers and databases/journals). Since this guide includes many tertiary resources which cover multiple topics, I am unable to provide a clear breakdown of how many resources are on each topic, but I have included how many resources are either fully or partially about the most relevant topics to my study. The topics included in the guide are:

- General U.S. history and general American West history

- Chronologies/day-by-day history
  - Icons/famous figures of the West
  - Documents/primary sources on the West
  - Literature/writings
- Regional history
  - Southwest
  - Mountain West
  - Specific states (Utah, Nevada, Texas, etc.)
- Crime
  - Gambling, saloons, etc.
- Environmental history/Geography
  - Barbed wire fences
  - Wild horses
  - Survey photographs
  - Maps and atlases
- Trade, Exploration, and Labor
  - Lewis and Clark Expedition
  - John Powell Expedition
  - Labor and Entrepreneurs/Business
  - Tourism
- Migration and Settlement
  - Overland trails and trail diaries
  - California Gold Rush

- Property rights and the creation of institutions
  - Homesteaders/settlers
- Women (6 resources)
  - Women's rights/politics
  - Women's history/roles in the West
  - Women and work
  - Women and war
  - Women's diaries
- African Americans (5 resources)
  - Slavery and the slave trade
  - Civil Rights movement/Black Panthers
  - Black cowboys
  - Black representation in media and Black artists/writers
- Asian Americans (3 resources)
  - Chinese laborers
  - Trade with China
- Latin Americans (12 resources)
  - Mexican cowboys
  - Mexican-American War
  - Mexican Independence
  - Chicano/a movement
  - Migration/immigration

- Experiences of people from Central America and Caribbean (Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Guatemalans, etc. – not just Mexicans)
- Native Americans (35 resources)
  - History
  - Genocide/disease
  - Removal and Trail of Tears
  - Captivity of whites/Indian brutality
  - U.S. Government and Indian relations
  - Specific tribes: Cherokee, Choctaw, Sioux, Seminole, etc.
  - Jesuits and Indians/Christianization
- Historians/Historiography

#### Scholarly Paradigm of Resources/Guide

This guide, similar to the CWU guide, also takes a more geographic rather than temporal approach to Western history, encompassing history beyond the 1800s and the period of westward expansion. This focus on the West as place is rooted in the New Western tradition. There are also a few resources in the guide that feel more in the vein of the Turner school of thought, such as the book about Indian captivities that paints Indians as brutal villains who terrorized white women and children (Michno & Michno, 2007). However, most of the resources in this guide seem firmly rooted in the Newest Western paradigm. This is evident by the use of terms like “borderlands” and “crossroads”, a social history focus on daily life and ordinary people, and a focus on marginalized groups and counter-narratives. Some particularly strong examples of this include:

- “The Invasion of America” by Claudio Saunt: an interactive map that shows the loss of Indian lands to whites as a result of westward migration and Indian removal. This map was created by Claudio Saunt, a historian at the University of Georgia, as an accompaniment to his book *West of the Revolution: An Uncommon History of 1776*. The use of an interactive map to show the loss of Indian lands is aligned with the Newest Western historians use of digital humanities methods and resources. (Saunt, n.d.)
- *The first West: writing from the American frontier, 1776-1860*, eds. David Rachels and Edward Watts, 2002: Focuses on overlooked writings of the West and includes “native accounts of whites” in addition to white accounts of natives. The summary of the book states that it demonstrates, “a strikingly vital interracial, interregional, and intercultural dialogue” and “illustrates the continuing diversification of American cultural history.” It also states that it, “challenges students' ideas about the American frontier, the West, and the processes of contact, settlement, community, and class.” This focus on native accounts/counter-narratives, diversifying the history, and challenging assumptions is what the Newest Western history is all about. (Watts & Rachels, 2002)
- *Revolvers and pistolas, vaqueros and caballeros: debunking the Old West*, D.H. Figueredo, 2015: The description included under the resource in the guide reads, “This riveting exposé reveals how a distorted belief in Anglo superiority necessitated the rewriting of American western history,

replacing heroic images of Mexican and Spanish cowboys with negative stereotypes.” Scholarship that seeks to challenge “Anglo superiority” (the dominant narrative of the West, and American history in general) and expose the way history is often written with an agenda is a main goal of Newest Western history. It goes beyond New Western tradition, which sought to uncover the history of marginalized groups, and actually examines why those groups were marginalized and why their history was obscured. (Figueredo, 2015)

## Columbia College LibGuide

### Overview/Description of LibGuide

The LibGuide from Columbia College is titled “History of the American West – HIST 362 Resource Guide” and was created by Vandy Evermon, a Humanities/Social Sciences Librarian in Stafford Library. It was last updated in February of 2021. The LibGuide metadata lists its subject as “history” and it has several tags: African Americans, American history, buffalo soldiers, gold rush, history, Indians, manifest destiny, North American Indians. Underneath the title, the brief description reads, “Analysis of Western America from colonization to the present.” The home page has an “About this Guide” section that includes a more detailed description, “This resource guide was designed to provide you with assistance in locating good sources of information as you do research on the history of the American West.”

The guide is organized into pages by resource type and topic. The main page includes a table of contents, as follows:

- Find Articles: Includes selected journals, and article and newspaper databases.
- Find Books: Includes selected e-books and subject headings.
- Primary Sources: Includes reference articles, selected e-books, and primary sources websites.
- Culture (12 resources): Includes selected e-books, websites, and reference articles on advertising, art, film, theater, music, and literature.
- People (18 resources): Selected e-books and reference articles on various immigrant groups.
- Politics (9 resources): Includes selected e-books, websites, and reference articles on cities, populism, progressivism, and vigilantism.
- Westward Expansion (22 resources): Includes selected e-books, streaming videos, websites, and reference articles on events, people, places, economy, and environment.
- Videos: Includes selected streaming videos from Stafford Library and History.com.

The main page also includes a list of suggested subject headings:

- West (U.S.) History
- African Americans - West (U.S.) – History
- Frontier and Pioneer Life - West (U.S.)
- Indians of North America - West (U.S.)
- Railroads - West (U.S.)- History
- West (U.S.) - Description and Travel

- Women - West (U.S.) – History
- Immigrants - United States
- West (U.S.) Politics and Government
- West(U.S.) Politics and Government 19th Century
- West U S Politics And Government 20th Century
- West U S Politics And Government 21st Century

In addition to this, the main page has a list of 6 related LibGuides:

- “African American History – HIST 374 Resource Guide”
- “History Resource Guide”
- “Copyright and Fair Use”
- “American Indian History – HIST 372 Resource Guide”
- “American History to 1877 – HIST 121 Resource Guide”
- “American History Since 1877 – HIST 122 Resource Guide”

The guide contains 114 primary, secondary, and tertiary resources. In addition to the usual types of resources, it also includes a lot of definitions/key terms that link to Credo Reference entries. Credo Reference is a subscription service that offers reference content from over 3,500 published reference works including dictionaries and encyclopedias (“Credo Reference”, 2021). The breakdown of resource types is as follows:

- Books/Ebooks: 33
- Databases: 6
- Journals: 4
- Articles: 5



- Digital collections/Web resources: 18
- Newspapers: 3
- Other LibGuides: 6
- Videos: 11
- Definitions/links to Credo Reference: 28

### Themes and Topics of Resources

Of the 114 resources included in the guide, 101 were coded for topics/themes (excluded newspapers, databases, and journals). Since the guide, like the Sam Houston State guide, includes many tertiary resources with overlapping subjects, I am unable to breakdown the numbers of resources for each topic, but have included the number of resources that are fully or partially about the most relevant topics to my study. Since the guide does include several topical page headings, I used those as the framework for listing the topics of the resources:

- Culture
  - Crime
    - Vigilantism
    - Guns/violence
    - Ku Klux Klan/racial violence
  - Art/media and literature
    - American West in literature
    - Westerns (genre) on film/tv
    - Native American literature
    - African American literature

- Tourist narratives
- Religion
  - Second Awakening
  - Mormons
- Environment
  - Urbanization/cities
  - Conservation/wildlife
- People
  - Women (16 resources)
    - Women scholars/intellectuals
    - Women's travel narratives/diaries
    - Women's rights/politics
    - Marriage – Mormon polygamy, interracial marriage
    - Slavery in the Southwest
    - Sexual exploitation of Native women
    - Chicana activists
    - Temperance movement/moral reform movements
    - Women in wartime
    - Women and work/labor
    - Working class women
  - African Americans (11 resources)
    - Black soldiers in the West/Indian wars
    - Black writers/literature

- Slavery/slave trade
- The “Black West”
- Latin Americans (11 resources)
  - Mexicans in the U.S.
  - Chicano/a activists
  - Spanish colonialism/interests in the West
  - Mexican-American War
- Asian Americans (7 resources)
  - Chinese laborers
  - Yellow peril
- Native Americans (21 resources)
  - Genocide and removal
  - Relations/conflicts with whites
  - Indian Wars – Wounded Knee, Washita Massacre, etc.
- European immigrants
  - Norwegian farmers
- Historians/historiography
  - Eugene Bolton
  - Frederick Jackson Turner
- John C. Fremont – military officer and explorer
- George Catlin – painter
- Brigham Young – Mormon leader
- Horace Greeley – newspaper editor

- Politics
  - Presidential elections
  - Populism
  - Progressivism
- Westward Expansion
  - Texas Revolution/the Alamo
  - Mexican-American War
  - Louisiana Purchase
  - Trail of Tears
  - Indian wars
  - Gold Rush
  - Labor and trade: cowboys, miners, fur trade, mountain men
  - Exploration and settlement: Lewis and Clark, overland trails, railroads, maritime travel/steamboats, forts/military presence, manifest destiny

#### Scholarly Paradigm of Resources/Guide

As with the other guides, this guide takes a West as place/geographic approach to the scope of Western history, which is aligned with the New West paradigm. There are also many topics that are more in line with the mainstream, Turner school of history such as vigilantism and guns and major wars/battles, which emphasizes the “rough and tumble” narrative of life out West. However, there is significant attention paid to marginalized groups and many of the resources in the guide take a revisionist approach and focus on counter-narratives and deconstructing the myths of the West, which are all tenets of the Newest Western paradigm. This guide also explicitly mentions Eugene

Bolton and the “borderlands” concept as well as Turner and the “frontier thesis”. The Newest Western history draws upon both of these concepts/theories to seek a more nuanced view of the history of the West, versus the New West tradition which rejected Turner’s thesis and saw the West as a distinct region and not a dynamic and nebulous borderland. Some strong examples of the Newest Western history approach in this guide are:

- *Their Own Frontier: Women Intellectuals Re-visioning the American West* by Shirley Anne Leckie (Editor); Nancy J. Parezo (Editor), 2008: This book focuses on ten women intellectuals/scholars that have been neglected and overlooked. These women were “pioneers in the writing of Indian-centered history, ethnology, and folklore that incorporated the insights, voices, and perspectives of American Indians.” The focus on women who not only defied the stereotypical roles often assigned to them in history, but who also dedicated their works to giving voice to Native Americans and centering their history, is an excellent example of the Newest Western style of history. (Leckie & Parezo, 2008)
- *American West: A New Interpretive History*, Robert V. Hine; John Faragher, 2000: This book is written by two eminent historians, Robert V. Hine and John Mack Faragher, who “present the American West as both frontier and region, real and imagined, old and new” and “show how men and women of all ethnic groups were affected when different cultures met and clashed.” The book focuses on the diversity of the West through the experiences of Indians, African Americans both slave and free, women,

and immigrants/migrants from Mexico, Asian, etc. The view of the West as “both frontier and region” is that Newest Western approach that seeks to combine the Turner frontier theory with New West theory to tease out the complexity and nuance of the West as both a place and a process. (Hine & Faragher, 2000)

- *Imagining the African American West*, Blake Allmendinger, 2005: This book is “the first comprehensive study of African American literature on the early frontier and in the modern urban American West.” Allmendinger seeks to challenge the way the West has traditionally been imagined and constructed, which has mostly neglected the “Black West” and the experiences and perspectives of Black people both in history and in present day. The book covers literature, histories, theater, music, and film from slavery and the Civil War through the Harlem Renaissance and the Civil rights movement. Centering the Black experience in their own words is a great example of the type of scholarship Newest Western historians are doing – trying to amplify marginalized people by giving them agency and their own voice, rather than simply painting them as victims. (Allmendinger, 2015)
- *California Women and Politics: from the Gold Rush to the Great Depression* by Robert W. Cherny (Editor); Mary Ann Irwin (Editor); Ann Marie Wilson (Editor), 2011: This book “examines the wide array of women’s public activism from the 1850s to 1929—including the temperance movement, moral reform, conservation, trade unionism,

settlement work, philanthropy, wartime volunteerism, and more—and reveals unexpected contours to women’s politics in California.” It goes beyond white middle-class women’s organizing to include the politics of working-class women and women of color, “emphasizing that there was not one monolithic “women’s agenda,” but rather a multiplicity of women’s voices demanding recognition for a variety of causes.” The emphasis on the “multiplicity” of women’s voices and agendas and the focus on working class women and women of color places this work within the Newest Western paradigm, which is all about agency and complexity – not reducing women to a monolith but instead exploring the many different intersecting and sometimes competing agendas and interests women had throughout the history of the West. (Cherny et al., 2011)

## Discussion

### Question 1: Topics

**What topics and resources are covered in these LibGuides? What is left out?**

	<b>Central Washington</b>	<b>Sam Houston State</b>	<b>Columbia College</b>	<b>Totals</b>
<b>Women</b>	7	6	16	29
<b>African Americans</b>	7	5	11	23
<b>Latin Americans</b>	6	12	11	29
<b>Asian Americans</b>	8	3	7	18
<b>Native Americans</b>	2	35	21	58

Table shows how many resources were coded for each topic.

Overall, each of these guides does a job of including a diversity of topics – from the expected and mainstream topics like cowboys, the Gold Rush, conflicts between Indians and whites, the Oregon trail, the Lewis and Clark expedition, etc. to more historically overlooked topics like Chinese railroad workers, women writers/ethnographers, deconstructing the mythology of the West, labor movements, civil and women’s rights movements, etc. The focus of many of the resources is on ordinary people or everyday life, though there are also resources on major figures and events.



There is a mixture of social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental history represented in each guide.

In all three guides, women and Native Americans seem to be the most well-represented out of all the marginalized groups that I have focused on in this study. Native Americans have the highest level of representation in the resources within these guides, with the exception of the Central Washington guide which links to a LibGuide on Native American History in lieu of providing the resources within that guide. The Columbia College guide also includes a link to a LibGuides entirely dedicated to Native American history. Women were the second highest represented group and the subtopics were fairly diverse. Though much of the work on women was related to women's trail narratives and diaries, there was also multiple resources on women in the workforce, women's rights movements, and a few that specifically mentioned women of color.

African Americans and Latin Americans were both decently represented. African Americans are ranked as the second least represented topic in these guides, however, the Columbia College guide does link to another LibGuide devoted entirely to African American history. The topics related to African Americans extended beyond slavery to encompass more of the Black experience in the West, whether as pioneers, miners, soldiers, or writers/artists. While Latin Americans are, in quantitative terms, as well represented as women, the topics on Latin Americans seemed to be heavily focused on Mexicans and the relationship between Mexico and America. There was only one resource that specifically mentioned including the experiences of people from other Latin American countries. While Mexico obviously played a major role in the history of the West, there were immigrants from other Latin American countries in the West and it

would be better to have some resources that explore the experiences of those groups, as well.

The least represented group by far was Asian Americans and Asian immigrants with only 18 resources across all three guides. With the exception of the Central Washington Libguide, the focus was mostly on Chinese laborers and railroad workers in California. The Central Washington guide did include resources on Japanese, Korean, and other South and East Asian groups, but much of it was modern history related to World War II and the Vietnam War. Asian Americans in the West, and in American history in general, is a topic that is often overlooked. Their experience gets limited to the railroad in California and the internment camps during WWII, leaving out all of the other experiences and groups that helped to build America, especially in the West. There was one resource that mentioned the concept of “yellow peril” and anti-immigrant sentiment, which is not nearly enough considering the racial violence many Asian communities and individuals endured during the history of the American West. This oversight could probably, in part, be attributed to a lack of scholarship in this area, since Asian Americans have long been white-washed and ignored in American history and society and their experiences rendered invisible. This lack of representation is one area that each of these guides needs to address, and that is imperative to address in other guides on American history and in library collections, as well as broader history curriculums and scholarship.

## Question 2: Scholarly Paradigm

**How well do these guides reflect current practice/theory in the academic study of the American West/westward expansion?**

For the most part, each of these guides reflects current scholarly practice fairly well, including resources that reflect both the New Western and Newest Western paradigms. The resources within them focus on social/cultural history, ordinary people and everyday life, and taking a revisionist approach towards topics to not only illuminate often overlooked topics, but to also understand why those topics have been traditionally neglected. Newest Western history seeks to take a nuanced approach that blends Turner's frontier thesis of the West with the regional concept of New Western historians. While New Western historians focused on marginalized groups, they often simply flipped the script of the West as proof of American exceptionalism and triumph and instead painted the history of the West as one of violent conquest and oppression. Newest Western historians seek to find the grey area between these two ideas and portray actors as neither victims or villains, but as agents who were as complicated and dynamic as the Western frontier itself. Many of the resources within these guides reflect this paradigm – seeking to diversify and expand the scope of the West and seeking to challenge assumptions and deconstruct the myths of American exceptionalism and manifest destiny.

The guides themselves all work from a New Western definition or concept of the West as a place, a unique region that is not limited temporally but extends to present day. Many of the resources within these guides deal with events and topics from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and some from the 21<sup>st</sup>. There is also the categorization of history into regions – Southwest, Pacific Northwest, etc. – that is rooted in the New West tradition. However, this approach is blended with a topical/thematic approach that is focused on specific types of history (social, political, etc.) or specific topics/groups. Newest Western history

sees the West as both place and process, which is reflected in the organization and content of these guides.

There were a few notable resources in the guides that felt a bit outdated and more in the vein of the Turner-esque ideas of the West. One of these is a book in the Sam Houston State guide about Indian captivities that explores the experiences of white settlers and explorers who were kidnapped by Indians. The book seems to portray Indians as villains and whites as victims, which was the dominant narrative of the West as can be seen in countless films, novels, and history books prior to the 1970s. (Michno & Michno, 2007) There's also a rather out of date video in the Sam Houston State guide titled "The Golden Land" which sounds like it approaches the West in a very Turner-esque way, espousing the "saga of manifest destiny" and the "pioneer spirit that made the Oregon Trail into Main Street." (Goetzmann, 1986) These resources seem out of place among the rest of the resources, which are firmly rooted in either the New or Newest Western paradigm.

### Question 3: Critical Librarianship

#### **How well do these guides reflect the values of critical librarianship?**

Critical librarianship aims to expose and challenge the status quo and to foster diversity, inclusivity, equity, and accessibility. Critical librarianship principles, as applied to LibGuides, call for the inclusion of marginalized perspectives and voices and a focus on representation of marginalized groups. Each of these guides does a good job of including marginalized groups and topics that are often overlooked, though certain groups and topics are still not as well-represented as they should be. Since the values of critical librarianship are well-aligned with those of Newest Western history, the fact that

these guides reflect that scholarly paradigm in many ways is indicative of them also reflecting the values of critical librarianship. Many of the resources within these guides seeks to deconstruct the myths of the West, such as American exceptionalism, white supremacy, patriarchy, manifest destiny, and rugged individualism. These same ideals are ones that critical theory seeks to challenge and expose. Counter-narratives are a major tool of critical theorists, and many resources within these guides focus on counter-narratives and challenging the dominant narrative of the West.

## Conclusion

LibGuides are, of course, not intended to be comprehensive guides on a given topic, but instead serve as a starting point or overview of a topic. However, the fact that these guides are often a student's introduction to a topic and a starting point for their research means that it is imperative that they do not give students a limited or biased view of the topic. If students are not shown the diversity of stories and people that lived in and created the American West, then they will continue to perpetuate the silencing of these marginalized people and perspectives. By including resources on marginalized groups like women or Asian Americans, and by ensuring that the resources included in guides are in line with current scholarly research, which emphasizes social history and seeks to demonstrate agency and nuance as opposed to a simplistic hero/villain or conqueror/conquered dichotomy, librarians can help students understand and deconstruct the myths of American exceptionalism and manifest destiny which are rooted in systems such as patriarchy and white supremacy. While this study is limited in scope to the specific topic of the American west, the approach taken in this study can be applied to other topics in history and other disciplines. A diverse, inclusive, and critical approach to LibGuides, and by extension collections, is one method librarians can use to fight against the many systemic issues in American society and empower their students to do the same.

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## Appendix A. List of LibGuides Analyzed

### Central Washington University LibGuide

**Title:** History, Trans-Mississippi American West

**Link:** <https://libguides.lib.cwu.edu/c.php?g=379504&p=2569681>

**Author:** Marty Blackson, Brooks Library Archives and Special Collections

**Last Updated:** February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### Sam Houston State University LibGuide

**Title:** HIST4370/HIST5377: American West

**Link:** <https://shsulibraryguides.org/c.php?g=86742&p=558456>

**Author:** Kristina Claunch

**Last Updated:** January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### Columbia College LibGuide

**Title:** History of the American West – HIST362 Resource Guide

**Link:** <https://library.ccis.edu/c.php?g=26049&p=158477>

**Author:** Vandy Evermon

**Last Updated:** February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021

## Appendix B: Coding Scheme

<b>Topic/Theme</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Terms/phrases</b>
Crime	Resources related to crime, violence, outlaws, etc.	Crime/criminals Law enforcement/police Bonnie and Clyde Barrow Gang Bank Robbery Murder Gambling Saloons Prostitution Prison/prisoners Vigilantism Violence Guns Ku Klux Klan
Environment	Resources related to environmental history, geography, etc.	Environmental Water Dams Fisheries Nuclear test sites Construction/fences Wild horses Field survey Landscape Land use Survey photos Maps Atlases Wildlife Conservation Urbanization

		Cities Nature
Labor	Resources related to labor history/movements and specific occupations	Labor movement Labor history Labor dispute Strikes Protests Massacres (of workers) Unions/unionism Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) New Deal Great Depression Civil Conservation Corps Mining/Miners Ranching/Ranchers Cowboy Rodeo Entrepreneurs Business Economic Workforce/workers
Trade and Exploration	Resources related exploration and trade during westward expansion	Expedition Exploration/explorers Lewis and Clark John Powell Fur trade Trappers Mountain Men Sporting party Tourism
Westward Migration and Settlement	Resources related to the settling of the West and westward expansion	Westward migration Overland journey Overland trail Oregon Trail Santa Fe Trail Mormon Trail California Trail Wagon train Pioneer

		Homesteading Settlement/settlers Immigrant Migrants Emigrants Gold Rush Property rights Creation of institutions Texas Revolution The Alamo Louisiana Purchase Railroads Maritime travel/steamboats Forts Manifest Destiny
Women	Resources related to women and women's experiences or primary sources written by women	Women/woman Female/feminine Gender roles Marriage/wives Domestic agendas Home economics Cowgirls Rosie the Riveter Sexual exploitation Temperance movement Moral reform movements
African Americans	Resources related to African Americans/Blacks and their experiences in the West	African American Black Slavery Slave trade Underground Railroad Civil Rights movement Black Panthers Harlem Renaissance The Black West
Asian Americans	Resources related to Asian Americans/Asians and their experiences in the West	Asian American Asian South Asian Chinese/China Japanese/Japan

		Korean/Korea Vietnamese/Vietnam Laotian/Laos Cambodian/Cambodia WWII internment camps Yellow peril Vietnam War
Latin Americans	Resources related to Latin Americans/Hispanics and their experiences in the West	Latin American Hispanic Central America Mexican/Mexico Cuban Puerto Rican Guatemalen Tejanos/as Chicanos/as Mexican-American War Mexican Independence Mexican Revolution Spanish
Native Americans	Resources related to Native Americans/Indians and their experiences in the West	Native American Natives Indians American Indians Indigenous First Nation(s) Tribal/tribes Indian affairs Indian Removal Trail of Tears Indian Wars Wounded Knee Washita Massacre Sand Creek Massacre Little Bighorn Battle Genocide Disease/smallpox Indian captivity Christianization/conversion Sioux



		Cherokee Choctaw Seminole
Europeans	Resources related to Europeans	European Norwegian
Regional	Resources related to specific regions/states	Pacific Northwest Southwest Mountain West California Texas Utah Washington Colorado Oregon Arizona New Mexico Idaho Nevada Alaska Kansas Oklahoma Missouri Nebraska
Historians/Historiography	Resources about historians or historiography	Historian Historiography Frederick Jackson Turner Eugene Bolton Frontier thesis Borderlands
Art/Media/Literature	Resources related to art/artists, film, tv, literature/writers	Art/Artists Film Television Hollywood Writers Literature Narratives Journalism Westerns (genre) Depictions Representation

		George Catlin Horace Greeley
Religion	Resources related to religion or religious groups	Mormons Brigham Young Polygamy Second Awakening Jesuits Christianization Presbyterian churches
Politics	Resources related to politics, politicians, etc.	Politics Political Politicians Voting President Elections Populism Progressivism Kansas-Nebraska Act Government/Federal Congress